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ABSTRACT

The teacher standards movement and effective schools research movement both proclaim that all students can learn, irrespective of family background, wealth, gender, or ethnicity. Effective schools research promotes seven correlates as core to schools where students learn and achieve: clear school mission, high expectations for success, instructional leadership, frequent monitoring of student progress, opportunity to learn and student time on task, safe and orderly environment, and home and school relations. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) was formed to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. It is dedicated to promoting respect and recognition for quality teaching. The NBPTS' five propositions of accomplished teaching include the following: teachers are committed to students and learning; teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them; teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning; teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience; and teachers are members of learning communities. The NBPTS propositions link directly to the effective schools correlates. Attaining National Board certification is a professional honor. As teachers complete the certification process, they must continually connect their classroom practice and student learning to National Board standards. (Contains 13 references.) (SM)

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Effective Rural Schools and National Board Professional Teaching Standards

A paper presented at the

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Effective Rural Schools and National Board Professional Teaching Standards

The Research on Effective Schools

Over the past several decades hundreds of research reports and educational studies have been conducted on the topic of "effective schools" (Cotton, 1995; Sammons, Hillman, and Mortimore, 1995). Largely through the work of Lawrence Lezotte, Ron Edmonds, and others, the "effective schools movement" gained widespread recognition during the 1970s, through the 1980s, and into the early 1990s. The chief postulate of the movement is that "all students can learn." In 1979, Edmonds, then a project director at Harvard's Center for Urban Studies published an article in Educational Leadership that noted the differences between high-achieving schools and those that were considered low-achieving. (Brandt, 1985; Edmonds, 1979). In his writings, Edmonds emphasized the following as characteristics of effective schools (Bullard and Taylor, 1993, 16):

- Teachers believed all their students could learn.
- Teachers had specific goals.
- Teachers were not satisfied with the status quo.
- Teachers had more supportive principals.
- The principal was a strong leader, visible and supportive.
- There was more student monitoring.
- Teachers had higher expectations for their students.
- Students were happier and worked harder.
- There was trust between students, faculty, and staff.

Edmonds, and other researchers, continued to look at achievement data from schools where student populations were comprised of those from poverty backgrounds. From across the nation they found schools where poor children were learning. These findings contradicted the writings of other educators in the early 1970's who argued that socioeconomic status was the major predictor for student success in school, not the role of the teacher or the ethos of the school. In an attempt to find answers to this conflict, Edmonds and others compared similar schools, in like neighborhoods, where children were not learning, or learning at a low level with other schools where students were achieving. Characteristics describing both types of schools were observed and documented. The basic conclusion of this comparative research was (Cawelti, 1995):

- Public schools can and do make a difference, even those comprised of students from poverty backgrounds.
- Children from poverty backgrounds can learn at high levels as a result of public schools.
- There are unique characteristics and processes common to schools where all children are learning, regardless of family background.
- Because these characteristics, found in schools where all students learn, are correlated with student success -- they are called "correlates".

Effective Schools Correlates

The body of correlated information on effective schools has since become what is now referred to as "Effective Schools Research." Follow-up research conducted in subsequent years reaffirms these findings and the fact that these correlates describe elementary and secondary schools where children do learn. Replication studies have been conducted in all types of schools: suburban, rural, urban; high schools, middle schools, elementary schools; high socioeconomic communities, middle class communities, and low socioeconomic communities (Bullard and Taylor, 1993; Cawelti, 1995).

The work of Effective Schools Research promotes seven correlates as core characteristics of those schools where students learn and achieve. Adherence to the correlates are the means to achieving high and sustained levels of student learning. This is true regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. The correlates are research-based characteristics of a school's climate directly associated with improved or better student learning. The Seven Correlates to Effective Schools are (Bullard and Taylor, 1993; Lezotte, 1990):

- Clear School Mission

  In the effective school, there is a clearly articulated school mission through which the staff shares an understanding of and commitment to instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures and accountability. Staff accept responsibility for students' learning of the school's essential curricular goals.

- High Expectations for Success

  In the effective school, there is a climate of expectation in which the staff believe and demonstrate that all students can attain mastery of the essential content and school skills, and the staff also believe that they have the capability to help all students achieve that mastery.

- Instructional Leadership

  In the effective school, the principal acts as an instructional leader and effectively and persistently communicates that mission to the staff, parents, and students. The principal understands and applies the characteristics of instructional effectiveness in the management of the instructional program.

- Frequent Monitoring of Student Progress

  In the effective school, student academic progress is measured frequently. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessments are used to improve individual student performance and also to improve the instructional program.

- Opportunity to Learn and Student Time on Task

  In the effective school, teachers allocate a significant amount of classroom time to instruction in the essential content and skills. For a high percentage of this time students are engaged in whole class or large group, teacher-directed, planned learning activities.

- Safe and Orderly Environment

  In the effective school, there is an orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm. The school climate is not oppressive and is conducive to teaching and learning.

- Home and School Relations

  In the effective school, parents understand and support the school's basic mission and are given the opportunity to play an important role in helping the school to achieve that mission.

National Board Professional Teacher Standards

Three years after release of A Nation at Risk, in 1986, the Carnegie Task Force on Teaching as a Profession issued a report entitled, A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century. The leading recommendation coming from the report called for establishment of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. The following year, the NBPTS was formed. NBPTS is governed by a national board of directors, most of whom are classroom teachers. The National Board has established high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. In addition to setting and assessing the standards by which outstanding teaching is judged in America's schools, the National Board is also dedicated to bringing quality teaching the respect and recognition it deserves (NBPTS, 2001; National Commission, 1996).

Increasingly, state offices of education and school districts are rewarding practicing teachers who achieve National Board certification with increased salary incentives. At the beginning of this new millennium, more than 5000 teachers nation wide had achieved National Board certification (Zimmerman, 2000). To earn such certification, teachers are required to assess the effectiveness of their teaching through two components (1) preparation of a portfolio that includes videotapes, samples of student work, and written assessments; and (2) provide evidence of knowledge and teaching skills in one's teaching field (Jenkins, 2000). National Board Certification is open to any teacher who possesses a bachelors degree from an accredited institution and has completed three years of successful teaching experience.

The Five Propositions of Accomplished Teaching promoted by the NBPTS serve as professional development benchmarks for effective schools. These are (National Commission, 1996, 75; NBPTS, 2001.):

1. Teachers are committed to students and their learning.

   Accomplished teachers are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They act on the belief that all students can learn. They treat students equitably, recognizing the individual differences that distinguish one student from another and taking account of these differences in their practice. They adjust their practice based on observation and knowledge of their students' interests, abilities, skills, knowledge, family circumstances and peer relationships.

   Accomplished teachers understand how students develop and learn. They incorporate the prevailing theories of cognition and intelligence in their practice. They are aware of the influence of context and culture on behavior. They develop students' cognitive capacity and their respect for learning. Equally important, they foster students' self-esteem, motivation,

character, civic responsibility and their respect for individual, cultural, religious and racial differences.

2. Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students.

   Accomplished teachers have a rich understanding of the subject(s) they teach and appreciate how knowledge in their subject is created, organized, linked to other disciplines and applied to real-world settings. While faithfully representing the collective wisdom of our culture and upholding the value of disciplinary knowledge, they also develop the critical and analytical capacities of their students.

   Accomplished teachers command specialized knowledge of how to convey and reveal subject matter to students. They are aware of the preconceptions and background knowledge that students typically bring to each subject and of strategies and instructional materials that can be of assistance. They understand where difficulties are likely to arise and modify their practice accordingly. Their instructional repertoire allows them to create multiple paths to the subjects they teach, and they are adept at teaching students how to pose and solve their own problems.

3. Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning.

   Accomplished teachers create, enrich, maintain and alter instructional settings to capture and sustain the interest of their students and to make the most effective use of time. They also are adept at engaging students and adults to assist their teaching and at enlisting their colleagues' knowledge and expertise to complement their own.

   Accomplished teachers command a range of generic instructional techniques, know when each is appropriate and can implement them as needed. They are as aware of ineffectual or damaging practice as they are devoted to elegant practice.

   They know how to engage groups of students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to allow the schools' goals for students to be met. They are adept at setting norms for social interaction among students and between students and teachers. They understand how to motivate students to learn and how to maintain their interest even in the face of temporary failure.

   Accomplished teachers can assess the progress of individual students as well as that of the class as a whole. They employ multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding and can clearly explain student performance to parents.

4. Teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience.

   Accomplished teachers are models of educated persons, exemplifying the virtues they seek to inspire in students -- curiosity, tolerance, honesty, fairness, respect for diversity and appreciation of cultural differences -- and the capacities that are prerequisites for intellectual growth: the ability to reason and take multiple perspectives to be creative and take risks, and to adopt an experimental and problem-solving orientation.

   Accomplished teachers draw on their knowledge of human development, subject matter and instruction, and their understanding of their students to make principled judgments about sound practice. Their decisions are not only grounded in the literature, but also in their experience. They engage in lifelong learning which they seek to encourage in their students.

Striving to strengthen their teaching, accomplished teachers critically examine their practice, seek to expand their repertoire, deepen their knowledge, sharpen their judgment and adapt their teaching to new findings, ideas and theories.

5. Teachers are members of learning communities.

   Accomplished teachers contribute to the effectiveness of the school by working collaboratively with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development. They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of school resources in light of their understanding of state and local educational objectives. They are knowledgeable about specialized school and community resources that can be engaged for their students' benefit, and are skilled at employing such resources as needed.

   Accomplished teachers find ways to work collaboratively and creatively with parents, engaging them productively in the work of the school.

Effective School Correlates and National Board Professional Teaching Standards

The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future pivotal report What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future has brought national teaching standards to the very forefront of educational reform. In fact, much of the momentum afforded the standards movement can be attributed to the widespread acceptance of the Commission's report.

Of the five major recommendations posed by the report, the first and most often cited is that educators and educational policy makers need to get serious about standards (The National Commission, 1996). Yet, also noted in the report are recommendations for placing more emphasis on recruiting new teachers, improving the quality of professional development, and creating schools that are organized for student and teacher success. The latter three recommendations have a direct relationship to the Effective Schools Correlates.

Even a casual examination reveals a clear relationship between national teaching standards and the Correlates for Effective Schools. This is especially true in the case of the five NBPTS propositions. As noted in the chart below, four of the five NBPTS propositions are directly linked to four of the seven Effective Schools Correlates:

National Board Standards	Effective School Correlates
Teachers are committed to students and their learning	High expectations for all students
Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach those subjects to students	Maximize learning opportunities
Teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning	Frequent monitoring of student progress
Teachers are members of learning communities	Positive, home, school, and community communication

The one over arching theme of National Board Professional Teaching Standards as well as the Effective Schools Correlates is the shared belief that all students can learn. This core tenet is the common thread running through each of the teaching standards. It also serves as the foundation of effective schools thinking and was the guiding principle of Ron Edmonds pioneering research to identify what distinguished higher-achieving schools from lower-achieving ones. Fundamental to National Board standards and central to the Effective Schools Correlates, the belief that all students can learn is the one precept that stands supreme.

National Board Certification

Since its inception in 1987, the National Board has sought to establish high standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, and to certify teachers who meet those high standards.

National Board Certification (NBC) is a symbol of professional teaching excellence. A National Board Certificate attests that a teacher has been judged by his or her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgements about students' learning, and acts effectively on those judgements.

Candidates for NBC participate in assessments based on National Board standards for accomplished teaching. The assessments were developed in collaboration with practicing teachers who verified that they capture best practice and represent indicators of accomplished teaching. All NBPTS assessments consist of the portfolio and assessment center (National Board Certification, 2001)

> **The Portfolio:** Candidates are asked to create a portfolio according to NBPTS specifications. The portfolio consists of four entries, each of which requires teachers to produce direct evidence that their teaching meets National Board standards. As part of that evidence, each entry must be accompanied by a written analytical commentary. Three entries focus on classroom artifacts (evidence in the form of student work samples and videotapes of teaching), and one entry requires evidence of professional accomplishments outside of the classroom.
>
> **The Assessment Center:** In the Assessment Center candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge of teaching practice across the full range of the certification area they have chosen. Four exercises are given at the Assessment Center. Candidates are allowed 90 minutes for each exercise. Candidates schedule a full day to attend an official Assessment Center location where the exercises are completed.

Attaining National Board Certification is a professional honor. As teachers complete the certification process, they must continually connect their classroom practice and student learning to National Board standards. Most teachers candidates find that the year-long reflection and analysis process to be one of their most rewarding and professionally meaningful experiences.

Conclusion and Remarks

At a time when educators, policy makers, and the public at large are calling for higher standards for teachers and students, several core values remain constant. The teacher standards movement and the Effective Schools movement both proclaim that all students can learn irrespective of family

background, wealth, gender, or ethnicity. Good teachers can and do make a difference in the lives of students. Students do learn more from well prepared, effective teachers and those schools with less effective teachers do produce lower-achieving students (Education Commission of the States, 2000; Glickman, 2000/2001).

If America is to have the world's best schools, it must have the world's best teachers. While many excellent teachers already work in our nation's classrooms, their work is too often unrecognized and unfortunately unrewarded. This results in many good teachers leaving the profession after only a few years. Worse still, many highly capable individuals give no consideration at all to teaching as a career possibility.

The best way to improve teaching is to first of all understand the characteristics of what good teaching is, then to implement the knowledge base and understanding of good teaching traits into the preparation and ongoing professional development of educators. National Board Professional Teaching Standards identify the elements of outstanding teaching,and the foundation for these standards is grounded in effective schools research of the last four decades.

During the next !0 years, two million new teachers will be needed in America's classrooms. As we cope with a serious shortfall of well qualified teachers either entering or remaining in the profession, those teachers who do meet national standards and who model proven practices of good teaching will be among the nation's most valued resources.

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